

On February 2, 1971, the Democratic Select Committee met and accepted a recommendation to create a nonpartisan, formal network for African-American Members of Congress. This was the official founding of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC). The 13 founding members were Shirley Chisholm, William L. Clay, George W. Collins, John Conyers, Ronald Dellums, Charles Diggs, Augustus F. Hawkins, Ralph Metcalfe, Parren Mitchell, Robert Nix, Charles B. Rangel, Louis Stokes, and Walter Fauntroy.

Often referred to as the “Conscience of the Congress,” the CBC has remained instrumental in the development of crucial legislation to meet the needs of the American people, specifically those who are often overlooked and disadvantaged. From its proactive efforts in the anti-apartheid faction, to demanding a federal holiday to honor the life and work of Civil Rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to health care, judiciary, and education reform, the CBC’s work has not only touched the lives of their constituencies, but the lives of millions of Americans and people abroad.

As we commemorate the CBC’s 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, let us remember our duty to continue to advocate for the underrepresented and disenfranchised. We must continue to use our efforts to effectuate positive change in domestic and international policy and be a voice for the silenced. I applaud the CBC on its past 40 years of leadership, advocacy, and activism. I look forward to continuing my service in this esteemed network.